

The Desert

TO THE TRUE AMERICAN.

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VOL. I

THE FAIR RECLUSE.

A TALE.

IT was on a fine evening in June, when Frederick Woodville, who was upon a visit at a gentleman's seat in one of the Western counties of England, was invited by the delightful serenity of the weather, to wander in a contemplative mood amidst the umbrageous walks of a wood. Unknowing and indifferent which way he went, he found himself upon an eminence which commanded a most delightful prospect of the distant surrounding country; though the hanging branches of trees with which its shelving sides were clothed, prevented a view of a valley sequestered and romantic, which was situated at its bottom. The sun was just sinking behind a distant mountain; while the clouds, which borrowed their transient glories from his setting beams, contributed to render his exit the more magnificent. The birds were warbling their dulcet notes; which, with the soft sighing of the wind amongst the trees, contributed to produce that rural melody which, to an ear not vitiated by the fashionable taste proved more delightful than all the chromatic refinements of the Italian stage.

This was a situation perfectly congenial to the disposition of Frederic, who possessed a considerable share of sensibility, and was pensive, imaginative and romantic: It was his delight to leave the busy walks of life, to wander in the regions of fancy; and whilst he was abstracted from the world in some such situation as has been just described, he could conjure up scenes of unreal existence, and every amiable emotion of his soul would be excited by the ideal pleasures and pains which the warmth of a glowing imagination produced.

What contributed to heighten this temper of mind in him was a tender disappointment he had met with in early life; though the lenient hand of time had soothed the sorrows of an affectionate heart, yet the remembrance of the first object of youthful regard was not easily effaced from a soul like Woodville's. The music of a soft air,—the relation of a tender tale,—the gloom of a solitary walk—and even the murmurs of a passing breeze—were sufficient to hush every boisterous passion into peace, and to dissolve him into tenderness; and while in such a state, the image of his Amantha would present itself to his mind, and produce that luxurious kind of grief, so sweetly described by Akenfide, which awakens the sensibility, and softens the disposition, without materially wounding the happiness.

Such was his situation at this time. Seated on a verdant bank near the brow of the declivity,

a sigh of recollection was just heaving his bosom, when he thought he heard the sound of some musical instrument faintly assail his ear: the notes were irregular, yet melodious beyond description; they seemed to be emitted from the airy harp of some celestial being. Frederic started from his reverie: he could scarce trust the evidence of his senses; but thought he had been deceived by the illusion of a heated fancy. He listened with most eager attention, and he again heard the same delightful music; it now breathed a symphonious air, mournfully sweet, and calculated to fill the raging of the most tumultuous sorrows, and to restore peace to the woe-worn soul bending under the pressure of affliction. Nothing could equal the surprise of Woodville. He was attentive to hear whence it issued. It appeared to rise from the vale below.

"Surely (said he) some bright spirit of this romantic region, who regards my misfortune with an eye of condescending pity, is now tuning his lyre to such strains as he knows are congenial to a love-lorn heart. Ah! too keenly I feel their influence! They thrill thro' my frame, and produce those sensations of ineffable pleasure which surely nothing mortal could excite!"

Frederic now arose, and, with steps of eager solicitude, descended from the hill on which he was seated, through a narrow winding path. With delight, he found himself entering one of the most agreeable situations he had ever observed.—It was bounded on one side by the eminence, from which there was no descent but by the path he came down: on the other, it was environed by a rivulet, which took its murmuring course through a plain adorned with the wild and irregular yet elegant ornaments which nature had lavished on it with the utmost profusion. On the other side of the stream the large wood, through which Frederic had passed, spread its solemn shades, awfully pleasing; and, by the thickness of its foliage, seemed anxious to seclude so sequestered a spot from the intrusion of curious observers, and to preserve its daisied lawns from being profaned by the tread of unhallowed feet.

Woodville felt a kind of awe steal over his mind, as he walked in a place which appeared to be consecrated by the residence of some superior being. These sentiments were in a great measure occasioned by the music he had heard. He could not conceive how sounds so plaintively elegant could arise in a situation almost shut out from mankind; or which, at any rate, could only be frequented by the few rustics who might live in the neighbourhood, and who certainly could not be capable of producing such strains.

While his mind was thus agitated by a variety of vain conjectures, he was suddenly surpris-

ed by the appearance of a female figure, who was seated in a kind of a bower, interwoven with jessamine and honeysuckles, which grew so thick that it was with difficulty he could catch a glimpse of her, by the white dress in which she was clothed, occasionally gleaming through its interstices. He proceeded with faltering steps, delighted and astonished to find that she was a lady, whose person was the epitome of elegance; and whose dress, which was in a style of fashionable simplicity, denoted her to be of superior rank. His eager curiosity to observe her features led him so near that his foot-steps were overheard, and he was thereby disappointed of the latter pleasure; for, being alarmed at the intrusion of a well-dressed gentleman, she immediately let down the veil that was suspended to her bonnet, and made a hasty retreat along a path which took its course between two rows of lofty elms; while Woodville remained motionless, in a state of suspense, doubtful whether it would be justifiable to heighten her fears by attempting to follow her. She proceeded for the space of some yards with a rapid motion, when turning round, with solicitude natural in such cases, to observe whether she was seized with such a tremor that she was obliged to support herself by a tree, for a few moments to avoid falling.

He was now sufficiently roused from his state of uncertainty, and flew with anxious haste to succour the distressed fair; but was not permitted to exercise his philanthropy; for, when she perceived him approaching, she endeavoured to avoid his assiduity, disordered as she was, by leaving the spot where she was standing. Confounded at her behaviour, he again stopped: his feelings were so agitated at the alarm she discovered, that he was upon the point of leaving the place, since his presence appeared to distress her: but curiosity prevailed over every other consideration; and he followed her, though at so respectable a distance that he thought every apprehension would be removed from her mind, of his being influenced by any improper motive. He advanced till he perceived a neat mansion, situate on the side of the rivulet shaded with willows. Towards this the lady went; and as she approached it, her trepidation appeared gradually to subside. She looked back frequently, and even slackened her pace, as if to give him an opportunity of overtaking her. He now perceived, what he had not before observed, that she had a musical instrument, which sufficiently denoted her to be the author of those sounds which had so powerfully affected his passions. He was now emboldened to approach her, though with the most polite caution.

"Pardon, madam, (said he) the presumption of one who, if he has offended, must plead, in excuse, the irresistible attraction of that divine melody which so sweetly vibrated through the calm evening air; and believe that you see before you one who possesses a heart too much alive to the soft impressions of beauty, to be capable of indulging a thought injurious to the peace of modest virtue."

To this address, the lady returned an answer, polite, yet embarrassed; and invited him into the house, which by this time they had reached. The door was opened by an old domestic, who regarded his mistress with that cheerful attention which evidences respect founded on esteem. Woodville was extremely pleased to find that the furniture and decorations of the inside of the house characterised its possessor to be superior to all vulgarity, yet inattentive to the frivolities of polite life; every thing was neat, without descending to meanness; and elegant, without being ostentatious. After some compliments had passed, Frederic could not help expressing his admiration.

"How is it, madam, (said he) that, in a place which appears secluded from human commerce, or where, at best, I could only have expected to find the rude hovel of the uncultivated peasant, it should be my happiness to meet with a lady, whose virtues and amiable deportment seem to render her calculated to add splendor to the most exalted ranks of social life?"

"Once, indeed, sir, (said she) I shone the gayest in the circles of fashion; and it was my highest ambition to set off my personal attractions by those expensive ornaments which would render me most conspicuous at the assembly, the drawing-rooms, and other places in the regions flatter with rapture, at the senseless adoration which was paid me by the fops who continually surrounded me. But, thank heaven! I have found that happiness in this retreat for which I languished in vain amidst the giddy routine of pleasure, round which I was whirled with fatiguing velocity. But I am convinced that nothing but such pursuits as will keep the mental faculties employed, can preserve us from inanity and disgust. It is only virtue that can give

'The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heartfelt joy.'

Nor need I regret that the voice of flattery no longer charms my ears with its fascinating delusions, while in my morning walks I feel an honest exultation at the simple but undisguised acknowledgments of those who have felt the labours of poverty alleviated by my bounty."

(To be concluded in our next.)

DIRECTIONS CONCERNING OUR IDEAS.

FURNISH yourselves with a rich variety of ideas; acquaint yourselves with things ancient and modern; things natural, civil and religious; things domestic and national; things of your native land, and of foreign countries; things present, past and future; and above all, be well acquainted with God and with yourselves; learn animal nature, and the workings of your own spirits. Such a general acquaintance with things will be of very great advantage.

THE WIDOW.

A FRAGMENT.

—"YES, (said the disconsolate Eliza, as she paid her usual visit, accompanied by her little son, to the tomb of her husband)—Yes, there is something in virtuous grief, which is very different from wretchedness. The love of my youth,—the joy of my heart,—my comfort,—my all,—is gone; but the memory of our felicity,—the consciousness of sincerity and fidelity—remain. His child,—his darling boy,—the image of his person and his heart—is my companion. He reflects the image of his father, and replaces him in my heart.—Misery can proceed from vice alone.—The dispensations of providence may inflict apparent evils, even on the good and virtuous; but when the wonderful ways of heaven shall be explained to mortals, they will, no doubt, be found to be mysterious blessings. To the will of heaven I yield, in confidence of its justice—in humble hope of its beneficence. I feel in my heart that very different is the melancholy and misfortune of the benevolent, from the disappointment and anguish of the selfish and the wicked. To my child, in whom is restored to me the image of his father, and the untainted purity of early youth, exhibits the virtues, his father had matured by manly reason, will I dedicate my attention. I will train him to justice,—to benevolence. I will exhort him to expand his mind by useful knowledge; to become like his father. He shall avoid the selfish; he shall avoid the lordly; he shall be the friend of his fellow-creatures,—the friend of the useful,—the friend of the poor. To relieve the oppressed shall be his highest pleasure, as it was his father's. Never shall he insult the low; never shall he flatter the proud. He shall love his country as his country ought to be loved; he shall promote the happiness of the laborious poor; he shall despise the arrogance of pampered statesmen. No sophistical arguments relative to the interests of society, and social institutions, shall mislead him: he shall be true to the interests of humble virtue. He shall—alas! how much I promise! how little may it be in my power to perform!—Yet, in resolutions like these, to have resolved is merit; by resolving I wish—I wish my darling son may prove like his father."

She sat down on the tomb of her husband,—she embraced her boy,—she shed delicious tears, the tears of virtue. Even

her sorrow far transcended in enjoyment all the mean delight resulting from the gain of the selfish, or the ostentation of the proud.

METHOD of preparing SKELETONS of LEAVES.

[From the Naturalist's Pocket-book.]

THE skeleton or fibrous part of leaves may be prepared by the following easy method, and when neatly executed, will afford a highly elegant and pleasing spectacle.

The leaves selected for this purpose should be of their full growth, and free from blemishes. Those which are naturally of a less succulent or juicy texture are best calculated for the purpose; as the apricot, apple, cherry, ash, box, and innumerable others. They must be laid in a large pan of water, to be renewed from time to time. In about the space of ten or twelve days, more or less, according to the degree of succulency of the leaves, they will be found to be greatly softened; and the outward skin or coat will be loosened or separated from the green pulp and fibrous part. When the leaves are arrived at this state, take them out; and, holding each in a basin of fresh water, with a pair of nippers, take hold of any part of the skin on each side, and pull it gently away, till it is entirely detached from both sides of the leaf. Then, with the thumb and finger, gently press the leaf while under water, shaking it slightly from time to time; by which means the green pulpy substance will be readily freed from the fibres, and the skeleton alone will remain: this is to be laid on a piece of blossom or blotting paper till it is dry, and then placed between the leaves of a book, or between fresh papers, to flatten. The chief care requisite in the preparation of these vegetable skeletons, consists in keeping the leaves a sufficient length of time in the water, to allow the outward skin to be separated with perfect ease and readiness from the fibrous part. If, upon trial, the skin appears not to separate with sufficient ease, the leaves must continue in water some days longer. It is advisable not to lay too many leaves in the same pan, lest they should catch or hang upon each other, so as to endanger breaking their edges when taking out or preparing.

By pursuing a similar process, several roots, barks, and other parts of plants, may be anatomised with equal success. In the Leverian Museum may be seen some of the most elegant preparations of vegetable skeletons.

In order to heighten the beauty of their appearance, they may be dyed either red or green, or of other colours, by dipping them in proper colouring ingredients, and again drying them.

A N U T.

Macklin and Doctor Johnson, disputing on a literary subject, Johnson quoted Greek. "I do not understand Greek," said Macklin.—"A man who argues, should understand every language," replied Johnson.—"Very well," answered Macklin, and gave him a quotation in Irish.

The Dessert

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15.

PANEGYRIC ON MARRIAGE.

If it be true, that our pleasures are chiefly of a comparative or reflected kind—How supreme must be theirs, who continually reflect on each other, the portraiture of happiness—whose amusements—

"Tho' varied still—are still the same—in infinite progression."

How tranquil is the state of that bosom, which has, as it were, a door perpetually open to the reception of joy, or departure of pain, by uninterrupted confidence in, and sympathy with, the objects of its affection! I know of no part of the single or bachelor's estate, more irksome than the privation we feel by it, of any friendly breast in which to pour our delights, or from whence to extract an antidote for whatever may chance to give us pain—The mind of a good man, I believe to be rather communicative than torpid:—If so, how often may a youth, of even the best principles, expose himself to very disagreeable sensations, from sentiments inadvertently dropped, or a confidence improperly reposed!—What, but silence, can be recommended to them; since, in breaking it: so much danger is incurred, among those little interested in our welfare? A good heart, it is true, need not fear the exposition of its amiable contents:—But, alas, is it always a security for us, that we mean well, when our expressions are liable to be misconstrued by such as appear to lie in wait only to pervert them to some ungenerous purpose?

The charms, then, of social life, and the sweets of domestic conversation, are no small incitements to the marriage state.—What more agreeable than the conversation of an intelligent, amiable, and interesting friend? But who more intelligent than a well-educated female? What more amiable than gentleness and sensibility itself? Or what friend more interesting than such an one as we have selected from the whole world, to be our steady companion, in every vicissitude of seasons or of life?

"Give me some companion," says Sterne, "in my journey, be it only to remark to, how our shadows lengthen as the sun goes down; to whom I may say, how fresh is the face of nature! How sweet the flows of the field! How delicious are these fruits!"

If either of these parties be versed in music, what a tide of innocent delight must it prove,—to soothe in adversity, to humanize in prosperity, to compose in noise, and to command serenity in every situation. If books have any charms for them, (and must they not be tasteless, if they have not) well might the poet of nature place them in company like this:

"An elegant sufficiency, content,
"Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books;
"Ease, and alternate labour, useful life,
"Progressive virtue, and approving heaven."

What a transition is it from what a Shakespear wrote, to what a Handel played! How charming a relaxation from the necessary avocations of business!—"Of business do you say?"—Yes; for I number this too, among the pleasures of the happily married. Let the lady find agreeable employment at home, in the domestic economy of her household, but let the gentleman be pursuing by unremitted and honest industry, new comforts for her, for his children, and for himself.

Is there not some gratification too, in reflecting, that the blessings of the marriage state, are more secure and permanent than most others which fall within the compass of human life?—it is the haven of a sea of gallantries, of turbulence, and fears. Other friendships are seen to fade, to languish, and to die, by removal of abode, by variance of interest, by injuries, or even by mistakes: but this is co-equal with life, the present existence has been called a state of trial, and of preparation for a better, marriage is the perfection of it, here our education is completed, all the sympathies and affections of the citizen, the parent and the friend, have their fullest spheres assigned them; and, doubtless, that pair, who in this engagement, are truly happy and irreproachable, must have so qualified themselves by a thousand instances of mutual affection and forbearance, for an improved state of manners and society, that they may be pronounced to have reached the pinnacle of human felicity, from whence to

Heaven, the transition will neither be difficult nor strange; for that is the home to which the best improvements of social life are only framed to conduct us.—

"Evening comes at last, serene and mild;
"When after the long vernal day of life,
"Enamour'd more, as more remembrance swells,
"With many a proof of recollected love;
"Together down they sink in social sleep;
"Together freed, their gentle spirits fly
"To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign."

THOMSON.

Hall of Hymen.

—MARRIED—

—On Monday, the 30th of July, at Farnham, in Surry, after a courtship of forty years, Mr. HUGH WELCH to Miss ANN HILL. The age of this couple, together with the Bride-man and Bride-maid, were as follow—Bride-groom, 82—Bride, 86—Bride-maid, Miss Betty Grimaway, of Farnham, 95—Bride-man, Mr. Colver, of Ditto, 82—Total, 345.

—On Sunday evening the 9th inst. by the Rev. Dr. MAGAW, Dr. JOHN MEER to Mrs. SARAH GOULD, widow of the late Mr. John Gould, formerly of Boston.

—On the same evening, Mr. JOHN MOOR to Miss SARAH GOULD, eldest daughter of the above Mrs. Gould.

—On Thursday evening last by the Rev. Dr. Blackwell, Mr. THOMAS PRIEST to Miss CATHERINE BILES, both of this city.

Repository of Death.

—DIED—

—On Thursday the 15th ult. after a short but painful illness, Mr. SAMUEL CHAMBERS, of this city, aged 20 years.

—On Saturday the 8th inst. Mrs. JANE DAVIDSON in the 72 year of her age.

—On the 4th inst. Mrs. AITKEN, wife of Robert Aitken, of this city, printer, aged 64 years.

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ALWIN & RENA.

A TALE.

ASK you, why round yon hallow'd grave
The myrtle and the laurel bloom?
There sleep the lovely and the brave;
O shed a tear upon their tomb!

"Oh! cease, my love, these vain alarms!"

—For war prepar'd, young Alwin said—

"For I must quit my Rena's arms:
My bleeding country asks my aid!"

"Yes, I will check this bursting sigh;
Yes, I will check these flowing tears:
A smile shall brighten in my eye;
My bosom shall dispel its fears!"

"You try indeed, to force a smile,
Yet Sorrow's drops bedew your cheek;
You speak of peace—yet ah! the while,
Your sighs will scarcely let you speak!"

"Go, Alwin!—Rena bids thee go;
She bids the sick the fields of Death:
Go, Alwin, rush amid the foe;
Go, and return with Victory's wreath!"

A thrilling blast the trumpet blew;
The milk-white courser paw'd the ground:
A mix'd delight young Alwin knew;
While Rena shudder'd at the sound—

Yet strove to check the rising fears,
Which now with double fury swell;
And, faintly smiling thro' her tears,
She falter'd out a long farewell!

Three tedious moons, with cheerless ray,
Had vainly gilt the face of Night;
Nor yet the hero took his way,
To bless the drooping Rena's fight!

At length, thro' Rena's fav'rite grove,
When now the fourth her radiance shed,
He came—and Victory's wreath was wove—
But, ah!—around a lifeless head!

Distracted at the blasting sight,
To yonder tall cliffs bending brow,
With beating breast she urg'd her flight,
And would have sought the waves below!

At while, with steady gaze, she view'd
The foaming billows, void of fear,
Religion at her right-hand stood,
And whisper'd to her soul, "Forbear!"

And now the storm of grief was o'er;
Yet Melancholy's weeping eye
Disill'd the slow and silent show'r,
Nor ceas'd—till Life's own springs were dry!

For this, around yon hallow'd grave,
The myrtle and the laurel bloom:
There sleep the lovely and the brave;
O! shed a tear upon their tomb!

AN ELEGY.

NEAR yon lone pile, with ivy overspread,
Fast by the riv'et's peace-persuading sound:
Where sleeps the moonlight on yon verdant bed,
O! humbly press that consecrated ground!

For there does EDMUND rest—the learned swain!
And there his pale-ey'd phantom loves to rove:
Young EDMUND, fam'd for each harmonious strain,
And the sore wounds of ill-requited love.

Like some tall tree that spreads its branches wide,
And loads the zephyr with its soft perfume:
His manhood blossom'd ere the faithless pride
Of fair LUCINDA sunk him to the tomb.

But soon did righteous Heav'n her crime pursue,
Where'er with wilder'd steps the wander'd pale:
Still EDMUND's image rose to blast her view—
Still EDMUND's voice accus'd her in each gale.

With keen remorse, and tortur'd guilt's alarm,
And the pomp of affluence the pin'd;
Nor all that lur'd her faith from EDMUND's arms,
Could sooth the conscious horrors of her mind.

Go, Traveller! tell the tale with sorrow fraught,
Some lovely maid per chance, or blooming youth,
May hold it in remembrance and be taught,
That riches cannot pay for Love or Truth.

NIGHT PREFERRED TO DAY.

WHEN, like a brilliant, glittering o'er the stream,
The silver moon in radiant glory dress,
Reflecting, throws around the lucid beam,
And o'er the hazy mirror shines confess:
The forest boughs receive the playful light,
From verdant leaves the pearly dew distill,
The glow-worm fires on the enspar'd fight,
With vocal cadence purls the silver rill:
The bird of night resumes his plaintive tale,
Conceal'd amidst the hawthorn's lonely bow'r;
And as the zephyrs die, the echoes fail,
Proclaims, with solemn dirge, the passing hour.
On giddy mortals may Apollo shine;
But Luna, and her solitude, be mine.

BEHAVIOUR.

ONE of the chief beauties in a female character is that modest reserve, that retiring delicacy which avoids the public eye, and is disconcerted even at the gaze of admiration. For when a girl ceases to blush, she has lost the most powerful charms of beauty. That extreme sensibility, which it indicates, is peculiarly engaging.

Silence in company, particularly a large one, is never mistaken by the judicious and discerning for dullness, but bespeaks a modesty essential in the female sex. Dignity of behaviour is necessary at public places, but care must be taken not to mistake for that confident ease, that unabashed countenance which seems to set the company at defiance.

ANECDOTES.

A wild young fellow was going abroad: His mother took him up into her closet, telling him she had a precious treasure to deposit in his hands, and after many grave admonitions produced the Bible, handsomely bound in two volumes; and to crown all, advised him to consult and search the scriptures. Little did the youth know how precious the volumes were; but you shall hear. On his return from sea, the old lady one day took him aside, and hoped he had remembered the last injunction she had given him: "Yes, he could very honestly say he had taken care of the Bible." To prove his respect and obedience, he runs up stairs to his own room, and returns instantly, with the two volumes safe and sound.

The good lady pulls off one cover: "Rather too clean, my dear." "O madam, I took great care of them: the second volume is equally fair." She shakes her head; intimating her suspicions that they had not been read so often as she wished: Then opens the first volume, and, lo! a ten pound bank note is found: the second volume displays a second note, and of twice the value. She was confounded; and so was her son: and I know no man, of my acquaintance, who more sincerely regrets that he did not *search the scriptures*.

A Friend lately invited a tradesman to dine with him, whom he treated with an excellent dinner, wine, tobacco, &c. His guest, after drinking pretty freely, became rude and abusive to his host, inasmuch that the friend's patience was exhausted, and he addressed him in the following words: "Friend, I have given thee a meat offering, a drink offering, and a burnt offering, and for thy misconduct I will now give thee a *beave* offering!"—and immediately threw him into the street, out of the parlour window.

An hon. member of the senate, some years past, inquired of a brother statesman, if they had made a house? No, sir, says he, there are but nine; we want one to make a quorum. Aye, (replies the other) I knew you could do nothing till I arrived. Very true, retorts the wit, a *cypher* completes the ten.

SAMUEL F. BRADFORD,

EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.